ERA ELECTIVE
NSF Agency Specifics

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Introduction to the National Science Foundation

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Introduction

• NSF Overview
• NSF Proposal Process, Review Process and Award Acceptance
• Post Award Management
• Research.gov
NSF at a glance

Mission: …to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare…

Significance: NSF is the funding source for approximately 24 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America’s colleges and universities. NSF issues on average 11,000 new awards per year.
NSF NSCL Funding

Dr. Konrad Gelbke directed the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory (NSCL) at MSU. NSCL's mission in 1992 was to establish NSCL as the best rare isotope research program in the US. NSF supported its completion with an annual budget of $25m.

Dr. Gelbke has recently retired and the NSCL is now managed by Dr. Thomas Glasmacher, Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) Director for Operations. NSCL has been incorporated into FRIB and in 2009 the FRIB was funded by the US Department of Energy with a target completion date of 2022 baselined at $730m.
NSF Summary

- **Independent Agency** (generally independent of presidential control)
- Supporting basic research & education
- Using grant/cooperative agreement mechanisms
- Low overhead & highly automated (Fastlane)
- $7.2B FY ‘14 budget
  $7.3B FY ‘15 budget
- **Discipline-based structure**
- Cross-disciplinary funding mechanisms
- Use of **Rotators** (temporary program directors though IPAs)
- **National Science Board** – created the NSF in 1950 and oversees direction and budget
Personnel at NSF

• Program Divisions/Offices - Program Officers
  • Reviews the proposal and analyzes the input from the external reviewers.
  • Makes funding recommendations to the NSF division directors.

• Office of Budget, Finance and Award Management – BFA (Org Chart)
  • Division of Grants and Agreements (DGA)
    Grants Officers are responsible for the award from pre-award to closeout to ensure compliance with award terms and conditions
NSF Organizational Chart

- National Science Board (NSB)
- Office of the Director Director & Deputy Director
- Office of Inspector General (OIG)
- Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI)
- Office of the General Counsel (OGC)
- Office of International & Integrative Activities (OIIA)
- Office of Legislative & Public Affairs (OLPA)
- Biological Sciences (BIO)
- Computer & Information Science & Engineering (CISE)
- Engineering (ENG)
- Geosciences (GEO)
- Mathematical & Physical Sciences (MPS)
- Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences (SBE)
- Education & Human Resources (EHR)
- Budget, Finance & Award Management (BFA)
- Office of Information & Resource Management (OIRM)
Finding NSF Funding Opportunities

- **NSF Guide to Programs**
  - Compilation of funding for research and education in science, mathematics, and engineering.

- **NSF Bulletin** (Called Active Funding Opportunities)
  - Announces key deadline and target dates for upcoming NSF proposals.
  - Time between announcement and deadline is typically three months.
  - Deadlines that fall on a [weekend/holiday](http://www.nsf.gov/home/ebulletin/) move to the next business day.

• National Science Foundation Update
  • A free subscription service provided by NSF that allows you to receive an e-mail message whenever new content is added to the NSF web site in the categories you select.
  • https://service.govdelivery.com/service/multi_subscribe.html?code=USNSF&custom_id=823

• Grants.gov
  • All NSF funding opportunities are posted on Grants.gov
  • You can submit applications through Grants.gov, but we do not recommend it. (Preferred Method: Fastlane)
Types of NSF Funding Opportunities

1. **Program Descriptions**

2. **Program Announcements**

3. **Program Solicitation**

4. **Dear Colleague Letters**

1. Proposals for a Program Description must follow the instructions in the *Grant Proposal Guide* (GPG).

2. Proposals for a Program Announcement must also follow the instructions in the GPG.

3. Proposals must follow the instructions in the *Program Solicitation*. The instructions in the GPG apply unless otherwise stated in the Program Solicitation.

4. Dear Colleague Letters are notifications of opportunities or special competitions for supplements to existing NSF awards.
Special Types of NSF Funding

• **Education & Human Resources** (EHR)
  - EHR mission is to achieve education excellence in U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
  - Robert **Noyce Scholarship** Program – education opportunities for undergraduates and K-12 educators.

• Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU)
  - [REU Sites](#)
  - [REU Supplements](#)
  - F&A/IDC is not allowable

• Graduate/Postdoctoral Level
  - Graduate Research **Fellowships** Program (GRFP)
    » MSU Graduate School [Instructions](#)
  - Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT) Program
• NSF Crosscutting Research, Instrumentation, and Partnering Programs
  • Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI) – promotes university-industry partnerships targeting high-risk/high-gain research.
  • Small Business Innovation Research Program and Small Business Technology Transfer Program (SBIR and STTR) – stimulates technological innovation in the private sector for increased commercial application of federally supported research results.
  • Small Grants for Exploratory Research (SGER) – for example, Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Emily.
  • Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) – to increase shared instruments for research and training.
Fastlane Submission Process

1996 - FastLane developers worked on a three-year experiment to streamline the way the agency does pre & post-award business by implementing new techniques using the World Wide Web cutting across the entire range of NSF business processes while simultaneously improving existing ones.

1997 - Jean I. Feldman led the NSF Policy Office and was actively involved in a number of internal and external streamlining activities, including implementation of P.L. 106-107, the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act (also called the Paper Reduction Act).
1. **Letter of Intent (LOI)**

   1. LOI is a brief **description of participants** and includes **the project scope** submitted by PI (unless institutionally limited).

2. **Preliminary Proposal**

   2. Submitted in advance of full proposal to **increase quality of full proposals** and reduce effort when chance of success is small.

3. **Full Proposal in Fastlane**

   3. Most common.
Supplemental NSF Funding Requests

• Submit in Fastlane at least two months prior to anticipated need
• Include:
  ✓ Summary of proposed work
  ✓ Justification
  ✓ Budget
• Not used for base salary or F&A increases
Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)

Provides guidance for the preparation and submission of proposals

• Pre-Submission Information – Contact with NSF program personnel is encouraged.

• Proposal Preparation Instructions – NSF will not accept or will return without review proposals that are not consistent with these instructions.

• NSF Proposal Processing and Review – carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by 3-10 other persons outside NSF, who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal.

• Non-Award Decisions – withdraw before funding recommendation; not accepted or proposal returned without review.

• Renewal Proposals – competing additional funding request for a subsequent period.

• GPG Subject Index – searchable and easy to use.
Award Policies & Procedures Guide (AAG)

Provides guidance for the NSF award process from award issuance to closeout

- NSF Summary “How to Manage Your Award” – contains links to compliance documents.
- General Grant Conditions (GGC) - General terms and conditions for all NSF awards.
- Research Terms and Conditions (RTC) – applies to FDP federal member agencies; does not apply to cooperative agreements or contracts.
- Cooperative Agreement Conditions (CAFATC) – applies to cooperative agreements.
New and Revised Policies and Procedures

• Updated Grant Proposal Guide (15-1) issued
  • Includes the new Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (Uniform Guidance; 2 CFA § 200).
  • Identifies additional automated FastLane error checking of data and forms input.

• Future Grant Proposal Guide (Expected in Jan ‘16)
  • Submission after the deadline will result in a fatal error.
  • Collaborator and Other Affiliation Information has been removed from Biographical Sketch and will now be submitted as a single copy document.
    • Page limitation on Biographical Sketch remains two pages.
• References Cited footnote moved to full text to reiterate that *submission of URLs is not required.*

• Biographical Sketches and Current & Pending Support information may no longer be submitted as a single PDF (to permit automated compliance checking).

• Internal institutional resources has been added as an example of Current and Pending Support.
Funding Rates and Proposals Submitted

**NSF Competitive Awards, Declines & Funding Rates**
Training Opportunities from NSF

- Regional Conferences

- NCURA National Conference
  - NSF Update
  - [http://www.ncura.edu/Education/MeetingsConference.aspx](http://www.ncura.edu/Education/MeetingsConference.aspx)
“Thank You”
National Science Foundation Proposal Process

Presented by Craig O’Neill
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Proposal Team 1 Manager
ProposalTeam1@osp.msu.edu
Program Solicitation

• Key Items
  • **Deadline vs. Target Dates** –
    • Target = 1-2 day flexibility and may need to receive acknowledgement by the Program Director
  • Institutionally Limited Proposals (**MSU-ILP** and **NSF Listing**)
  • Budget **Restrictions**
  • Additional **Supplementary Docs**
Fastlane

- [www.fastlane.nsf.gov](http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov)
- Interactive real-time website for NSF
  - Searchable help and screen-shots
- Uses
  - Proposal Preparation
  - Proposal Updates
  - Check Status of Submission and Award
  - Post-Award Administrative Activities (CGA)
Registering in Fastlane

• Email your OSP Proposal Team and provide:
  ▪ Name
  ▪ Email
  ▪ Phone Number
  ▪ Fax
  ▪ Department
  ▪ Highest Degree Attained and Year Attained

• OSP can also set up Other Authorized Users
Project Summary

- **Project Summary** requires text boxes in FastLane not to exceed 4,600 characters and will include:
  - **Overview**
    - Statement on **Intellectual Merit**
    - Statement on **Broader Impacts** - Section 526 of the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010*

- Proposals with special characters may upload Project Summary as a PDF document

- **Text boxes must be filled** out OR a Project Summary must be uploaded, or FastLane will not accept the proposal
Project Description

• Must contain a separate section with a discussion of the **broader impacts** of the proposed activities
• Results from Prior Support (if any) must address **intellectual merit** and **broader impacts**

Biographical Sketch

• The “Publications” section to of the Biosketch has been renamed “Products”
  • This change makes clear that products may include, but are not limited to, publications, data sets, software, patents, and copyrights
  • If only publications are identified, the heading “publications” may be used in this section of the biosketch
Budget (NSF GPG)

- Salary and Wages
  - 2 Month Paid Effort by NSF in a year (GPG)
  - Administrative Support should only be budgeted as a direct cost if an extensive amount of support is needed.
    - 25% effort or more (NSF GPG)
  - Use person months to describe effort (NSF GPG)
Budget

• Participant Support Costs (NSF GPG)
  • Defined as: “…transportation, per diem, stipends, and other related costs for participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with NSF-sponsored conferences, meetings, symposia, training activities and workshops.” *Grant Proposal Guide, January 2013*
  • 4 Different Categories
    • Stipends, Travel, Subsistence, Other
  • Indirect costs (F&A) are not allowed on Participant Support Costs
Budget

- Subcontractors (NSF GPG)
  - Must be registered in Fastlane
  - Some solicitations require subcontracts as opposed to linked collaborative proposals
  - Budget and justification must be added separately
  - If the subcontractors’ PI is listed on the Cover Sheet as Co-PI, they can view and edit the proposal
  - Signed letter of intent required from organization’s authorized official, but is not usually required to be uploaded in Fastlane.
Budget

- **F&A Costs**
  - Most solicitations allow for MSU’s full [federally negotiated F&A rate](#)
  - **Exceptions** include:
    - Travel Grants
    - Equipment Grants
    - REU/RET/GRS Supplements
    - Construction
    - Fellowships
    - Foreign Grantees
Budget

• Cost Share
  • New policy on voluntary cost share
    • Do not include any *voluntary cost share* in budget, budget justification, or project description
    • If the PI wants to include any voluntary uncommitted cost share, it must be in the Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources section of the proposal without quantifying effort or $, and also listed on the eTransmittal in the Notes section
    • The lead PI should request some salary support from NSF since they cannot be removed from the budget
Budget

• Budget Justification (NSF GPG)
  • Typically limited to 3 pages
  • Detail rates of pay for senior personnel, postdocs, and other professionals that are requested in budget
  • Equipment must be adequately justified
  • Travel and relevance to project must be adequately justified and quantified
  • Consultants’ expertise, organization, compensation, and # of expected days of service on project should be described
  • No need to reiterate total $ amounts already in budget
Current and Pending Support (NSF GPG)

- Make sure effort is listed in person months based on PI appointment
- Include the proposal you are working on as pending
- All current, pending, and planned projects should be included, no matter the funding source (OSP Summary)
- Follow NSF format
Supplementary Documents

• **Post Doc Mentoring Plan**
  
  • Must be included if requesting salary support for a Post Doc
    
    • If Collaborative Proposal, the lead must attach the Post Doc Mentoring Plan that covers all collaborators, whether or not the lead budgeted a Post Doc

• 1 Page Maximum

• MSU’s [Individual Development Plans (IDP)](https://example.com/idp) for Postdocs and Graduate Assistants summary
Supplementary Documents

• Data Management Plan (OSP Summary)
  • 2 Page Maximum
  • If Collaborative Proposal, the lead must attach the Data Plan that covers all collaborators
  • Different requirements by directorate
  • Contact your college for guidance, or:
    • Research Data Management Guidance, MSU Libraries
      Researchdata@mail.lib.msu.edu - lib.msu.edu/rdmg
Collaborative Proposals (NSF GPG)

- Multiple institutions simultaneously submit proposals and receive a separate award
- Non-lead assigns PIN and gives to lead to link proposals
- Generally the non-lead collaborator will not need to submit a separate project summary, project description, and references cited
- Only the lead collaborator should submit post doc mentoring plan and data management plan that incorporates all institutions’ plans
Allow SRO Access

- Allow View/Edit Access for OSP to review several days in advance
- Remember to go back to allow View/Edit/Submit Access for OSP to submit
Proposal File Update (NSF GPG)

• Accessed via the Proposal Functions
• Update will be automatically accepted if prior to deadline date or sent for review for unsolicited and target date submissions
• Program Officer will need to approve update after deadline
• Must include why and what the changes are
• No longer used to submit revised budgets
Review Process

• Proposals may not be considered if:
  • Inappropriate to be supported by NSF
  • Insufficient lead-time (start date 6 months out)
  • Duplicate or substantially similar to proposal already under consideration or awarded
  • Does not meet NSF’s proposal preparation requirements
    • Page limits, late submission, formatting, etc.
  • Previously reviewed and declined, and not substantially different
  • Not responsive to solicitation
Review Process

• PI can check proposal status
  • Under Proposal Functions, then Proposal Status
• Review may take up to 6+ months
• PI will receive copies of reviewer comments, and information and declination explanation if applicable
NSF Specifics
Post Award Management

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Contract and Grant Administration
NSF Post Award

Objectives

Discuss various prior approvals
Fastlane demo (for post award notifications and approvals)
No cost extensions: grantee vs. sponsor approval
Reporting requirements
Post-Award Management

• Notifications and Requests

- All notifications and requests are handled by the Awards Group in CGA, awards@cga.msu.edu.

- A **notification** is submitted to NSF as an FYI, but does not require NSF’s formal approval.

- A **request** is submitted to NSF asking for permission. Permission is sometimes given as an email notification and sometimes as an amendment to the award.
## Notifications

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<th>GRANTEE NOTIFICATION TYPES</th>
<th>Topic Guidance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Short-Term Absence of the PI/PD (Up to Three Months)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant Changes/Delays or Events of Unusual Interest</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant Changes in Methods/Procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost Sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflicts Of Interest</td>
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</table>
## Requests

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<th>GRANTEE REQUEST TYPES</th>
<th>Topic Guidance</th>
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<td>(Requires NSF Approval)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Withdrawal of PI/Co-PI</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pre-award Costs in Excess of 90 Days</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reallocation of Funds Budgeted for Participant Support Costs</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Rearrangement/Alteration $25,000 or over</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>- NSF Approved No-Cost Extension</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Changes in Objective or Scope</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Subawarding, Transferring or Contracting Out Part of an NSF Award</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Long-Term Absence of the PI/PD (Over Three Months)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Significant Change in Person-Months Devoted to Project</td>
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<td>- PI Transfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Change PI and Add/Change Co-PI</td>
<td>AAG</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Prior Approvals

• **PI Transfer Request**
  - NSF permits the PI to transfer the grant to a new organization, if both the new and the original research organization agree (at MSU the Chair must approve the transfer)
  - The PI prepares the PI Transfer request which must include: balance being transferred, progress to date, description of work to be performed
  - The new organization will receive this request and submit to NSF – essentially re-applying for the award and compliance document will be required
  - Please note when final request is submitted to NSF the estimate of total costs becomes final and should be confirmed with CGA
Prior Approvals

- **Change PI Request**
  - May add a new PI/Co-PI, remove existing PI, or promote the Co-PI to PI
  - All requests require a justification for change
  - For additional PI/Co-PI’s a biographical sketch and current and pending support is required
  - An NSF profile is required (CGA or OSP can provide)
Prior Approvals

• Addition of a Subaward
  - A subaward not in the original budget requires NSF approval
  - Request must include:
    • A clear description of the work to be performed
    • The basis for selection of the subawardee organization
    • A separate budget/justification for each subaward
Prior Approvals

• Reallocation of Participant Support Costs
  - Request must include:
    • Original PSC amount
    • Revised PSC amount
    • Justification for reallocation

* PSC, REU and RET funds are typically set up in separate RC accounts under the main award.
Case Study #1

• Dr. Jake Smith has an NSF award that includes paying participant travel to a conference. He realizes he did not have enough funds budgeted for this travel and would like to reallocate funds to participant support costs.

• Does a request need to be submitted in Fastlane?

• What if he budgeted too much for participant travel and would like to spend these funds on supplies? Does he need to submit anything in Fastlane?

• Dr. Smith would like to travel to this conference as a participant as well. Can his travel costs be charged under the participant support category?
No Cost Extensions

- Grantee Approved
  - Submitted as a notification in Fastlane
  - Can only extend the end date up to twelve months
  - Must be requested at least 10 days prior to the end date
  - Technical justification is required
No Cost Extensions

• NSF Approved
  - Submitted as a request in Fastlane
  - May be requested if additional time is needed over and above the initial 12 month NCE
  - Must be requested at least 45 days prior to the end date (if later, will need to submit additional justification)
  - If approved an amendment will be made to the award
  - Technical justification, plans for use of unobligated funds, and the amount of funds remaining are required
Change in PD/PI and Co-PI Effort

• If the PI on a project reduces his or her time on a project by 25% or more, you must submit a Significant Change in Person-Months Devoted to Project Request.

• This is also applicable to a no cost extension period
Senior Personnel two-month salary limit

• As of NSF 15-1 December 26, 2014:
  • Under normal rebudgeting authority…an awardee can internally approve an increase or decrease in person months devoted to the project after an award is made, even if doing so results in salary support for senior personnel exceeding the two month salary policy. No prior approval from NSF is necessary as long as that change would not cause the objective or scope of the project to change.
Case Study #2

- Dr. Jake Smith has another NSF award that will be ending in one month. He had previously been working 2 months a year on this project. He is considering a no cost extension request.

  - What should be submitted in FastLane and should he be concerned about it being disapproved?

  - If the only remaining task is the final technical report, is an extension needed?

  - What if he realizes that he will need to work 4 months in the upcoming year to complete this project? Can he do this? Will there be any issues regarding his effort report and pay?
Reporting Requirements

• Progress Reports
  - Annual, Final, and Interim progress reports are submitted by the PI on Research.gov.
  - Types of Reports:
    - Annual – Typically due on the anniversary of the award date.
    - Final – Due within 3 months following the expiration of the grant period.
    - Interim – May be required. Typical for Cooperative Agreements
    - Public Outcomes Report – Due within 3 months following the expiration of the grant period (as of January 4, 2010).
  - Untimely reports may cause new awards and other requests to be held-up, whether you’re a PI or co-PI!
Reporting Requirements

- **Financial Reports**
  - All NSF award payments and processes occur in the Award Cash Management System (ACM$) through Research.gov
  - Draws are completed on an individual account basis (MSU completes this twice a month)
  - An award is removed from the system 120 days after end date, additional upward/downward adjustments are possible for a short period of time after this
  - Quarterly financial reporting is no longer required
Anomalous Drawdown Patterns

- Start up costs
- Drawdown Spike
- Normal drawdown pattern
- Extinguishing Remaining Grant funds (before expiration)
- Extinguishing Remaining Grant funds (after expiration)
About Project Reports

Research.gov supports the creation of 4 types of project reports, which meet the federal Government's requirement that research agencies implement a new reporting format for research and research-related projects called the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR). Principal Investigators (PIs), Co-PIs, Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) staff and administrative users with read-only access are able to create, edit and view project reports.

Login to create, edit and submit reports
Find project outcomes reports

The 4 types of project reports are:

- Annual report
- Interim report
- Final report
- Project outcomes report

Annual, Interim and Final Reports

Annual project reports are required for all standard and continuing grants and cooperative agreements. Final reports are required for all standard and continuing grants, cooperative agreements and fellowships. Interim project reports are not required and are used to update the progress of a project any time during or before the award period expires.

Project Outcome Reports (for general public)

The Project Outcomes Report is a report written for new and existing awards, specifically for the public, that provides insight into the outcomes of NSF-funded research. Project Outcome Reports can be viewed through Research.gov’s Research Spending & Results search service.

More Information

- Example Project Reports (Demo site)
- Project Report Screenshots and Instructions
- Project reports tutorial (video)
- BibTeX tutorial (video)
- Project reports template
- Project Reporting Getting Started Guide
- Project Reporting FAQs
Thank You for Attending!

All ERA course materials are posted on the SPROUT site:

https://sprout.vprgs.msu.edu/training/electives/